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War and Peace

MONTHS and years have passed since the last shot was fired and the last all-clear sounded at the conclusion of a war that for long imperilled our very existence. Let us ask ourselves if we are not already beginning to forget the debt we owe to those who made this victory possible. Are we, the many, as clear in our memories as we should be, of the Churchillian few? The medical profession in Ulster has had several recent reminders of this deliverance, and it is timely to reflect for a moment on the special service rendered by the people of this Province to the care of the sick and wounded.

The War Record of the Queen's University of Belfast, recently published by the authority of the Senate and ably edited by Professor M. J. Boyd, is one of which the academic community may well be proud. Among the names on this list will be found those of 729 medical graduates, including Fellows and Members of the Ulster Medical Society.

Striking as this figure is, it by no means represents the total contribution of the University to the medical services of the armed forces. The list of 2,335 names includes not only doctors and dentists, but nurses, V.A.D.'s, and many others with specialist qualification who were not medical, such as bio-chemists and analysts. There is also that stout-hearted group who gave up their medical studies to serve with combatant arms. Not least among these many must be included the padres, who served with medical units.

Nor is it from the University alone that Ulster's contribution to war medicine comes. Ulster nurses played a distinguished part, as their awards testify. Men and women, in numbers which no one has attempted to compute, served in many capacities: as dispensers, physiotherapists, radiographers, and in other technical branches, and still more volunteered for the even more arduous, but no less honoured, task of nursing the sick and wounded.

This great band, could it be numbered, is the real total of Northern Ireland's part in war medicine.

The names of the Fellows and Members of the Ulster Medical Society who served in the war are commemorated in a memorial tablet unveiled in the Whitla

Medical Institute on 24th March. It is the gift of Dr. Robert Marshall, who was President of the Society in 1942-43, and as our President, Dr. Barron, said on the occasion of the unveiling, the gift is both valuable and timely. It is the counterpart of the 1914-1918 Roll of Honour presented in similar circumstances by the late Dr. H. L. McKisack. Both are now in position on the stairway of the Institute. The names inscribed on it are those of Fellows or Members who joined the Society not later than May, 1948.

126 of our colleagues served. Of these, three did not return :

ROSS McFAUL KIRKPATRICK was a Surgeon-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for conspicuous gallantry, leadership, and devotion to duty in a naval engagement off Tobruk, and afterwards was reported missing, believed killed, in 1944.

HUMPHREY BARRON THOMSON, a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, was reported missing, believed killed, after the fall of Singapore, and it was after many months of anxiety that his parents, Professor and Mrs. W. W. D. Thomson, learned that he had been killed when attending to the wounded men under his care.

ROBERT WILLIAM STANLEY MARSHALL, a Squadron-Leader of the Royal Air Force Medical Service was missing while flying in Burma in June, 1945, and was reported believed killed a year later. He was the only son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Marshall.

These young men maintained in life and death the highest traditions of our race and of our profession. Their names are written in letters of gold; let us remember them with pride and gratitude.

BACK NUMBERS

FROM time to time the editors are asked for back numbers of this Journal to complete files in university and hospital libraries, or to provide copies of articles not available as reprints.

We would be grateful, therefore, if any Fellow or Member of the Society who has back numbers of the Journal which he no longer requires would leave them in the Institute, care of the editors.